The story “Old Man at the Bridge” by Earnest Hemingway is set in the backdrop of Spanish Civil War in 1938. It starts with the description of an old man who was sitting at a bridge. It was a war-like situation as the Fascists forces were advancing towards Ebro. Our narrator, a news reporter, was in the charge to cross a pontoon bridge to check the advancement of the enemy forces. He saw that an old man with steel rimmed spectacles and dusty clothes was sitting beside the road at the bridge while carts, trucks and people were crossing the bridge to get to a safe distance from the enemies. The old man looked too tired to walk any further.

Seeing the old man sitting there for a long time, the speaker went to him and asked him where he came from. The old man answered that he was coming from San Carlos, his native town, twelve kilometers away from there. The man smiled as it was a pleasure to him to mention his native land.

Then the speaker had a chat with that man and came to know that the seventy-six years old man had no one but pets — two goats, a cat and eight pigeons. They were his family and he spent his time looking after the animals. Now that the enemy forces were approaching, he was asked to leave the place. So he was forced to leave his pets on their fate. The old man is not anxious about what would happen to his family — the animals. He thinks that the cat would be able to look after itself. But what about the pigeons and the goats? He asks the narrator to guess what would happen to his pets? The speaker consoles him that they will be fine.

He asks the old man if he left the dove cage unlocked. As the old man answers in the assertive, he suggests that they will fly. But he cannot throw light on the future of the goats.

Then our narrator urged the man to get up and try to walk further as he would now leave. The man tried to walk but could not. He sat down again in the dust.

The narrator mentions that it was Easter Sunday and a gray overcast day. He finishes his story by commenting that there was nothing in favour of the old man except the facts that the enemy planes were not up in the sky for the overcast weather and that the cats can look after themselves.